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Reflections

on My Debate with
BART EHRMAN



**WAS THE
BIG BANG
JUST PROVEN BY
ASTRONOMERS?**

**BUTT/EHRMAN
DEBATE DVD**



ON April 4, 2014 I debated Dr. Bart Ehrman on the campus of the University of North Alabama in Florence, Alabama. Approximately 1,500 people attended the event live, and an estimated 70-80 thousand people viewed the debate on-line or via television on the Gospel Broadcasting Network. Since the recording of the debate was uploaded onto Youtube, it has been viewed almost 7,000 times. All told, the best estimates we have indicate that between 90-100 thousand people have viewed the debate.

Dr. Ehrman, a self-proclaimed agnostic, was there to affirm the proposition: “The pain and suffering in the world indicate that the Christian God does not exist.” I was there to deny that proposition and show that the pain and suffering in this world do not show that God does not exist. In this article, I would like to highlight some things that I learned from this debate.

UNBELIEF LIKES TO HIDE ITS REAL AGENDA

ALMOST a year prior to the event, Dr. Ehrman agreed to the proposition of the debate. He contracted to shoulder the affirmative position and show how the pain and suffering in the world indicate that the God of the Bible does not exist. When he issued his opening

statements, however, he stated that he was not there to win a debate. In fact, throughout the evening, he said that he was not even trying to convince the audience of the accuracy of his position. He said that he did not mind if the listeners agreed with him or not. If the listeners wanted to believe something different from what he was saying, it was fine with him, as long as they had seriously thought it through. He made it a conspicuous point to insist that he was not trying to convert anyone, or even convince anybody of anything. It is interesting to note that Blair Scott, the atheist I debated in 2011, said almost the exact same thing.

There are two reasons why I find Dr. Ehrman’s approach perplexing. First, it shows a complete failure to do what he agreed to do with the proposition. If a debater agrees to affirm a certain proposition, then the debate can only proceed if he attempts to do that. Dr. Ehrman, in essence, said early on in his opening comments that he could not uphold his end of the debate and show that the pain and suffering in the world indicate that the Christian God does not exist.

Second, Dr. Ehrman’s statement that he was not trying to convince the audience of his point of view is simply not true. In the very act of saying he is not trying to convince

you of anything, he is trying to convince you that he is not trying to convince you. You see, if he can convince you that he is not trying to convince you of anything, then when he tries to convince you that the Christian God does not exist, you may not even recognize what is happening. It is the classic “wolf in sheep’s clothing” technique. The phrase comes from a dangerous predator (a wolf) attempting to look innocent by donning the garb of a helpless sheep. If Ehrman can sheepishly suggest that he is not a big, bad unbeliever here to steal your faith, then you may not be on the defensive when he tries to do that very thing.

There are at least two ways to lay bare Dr. Ehrman’s deception. First, we could simply ask the common sense question: why is Dr. Ehrman writing books and doing debates if he does not care if he convinces anyone of his premises? If the situation is such that any point of view is equally valid, then, pray tell, why has Dr. Ehrman poured thousands of man hours into writing books that state that the biblical view of suffering is contradictory, or that pain and suffering indicate that the Christian God does not exist? What’s it all for? Is he simply spinning his wheels to collect royalties and honorariums from the sale of his books and from his speaking engagements, with no desire to see others adopt his point of view? Such would seem absurd. The mere fact that he has engaged in five debates on the topic of suffering (and numerous debates on various other topics) brings to light his disingenuous claim that he is not trying to convince people that the Christian God does not exist.

The second way to show the falsity of Dr. Ehrman’s claim that he is not trying to convince people of the correctness of his position is to show specific instances in our debate in

which he tried to convince the audience of his position. That can easily be done. For example, throughout the debate, Dr. Ehrman insisted that the Bible writers made statements about suffering that are contradictory to one another. He stated that the books of Job and Ecclesiastes explicitly deny that there is an afterlife. And he quoted several verses from Ecclesiastes that supposedly “prove” that the book denies an afterlife. Was he trying to convince the audience that Ecclesiastes was not inspired and contradicted other books of the Bible? Absolutely. [NOTE: During the debate it was brought out that he was using the verses out of context and “conveniently” left out the other verses in the text that affirm an afterlife.] At another point in the debate, Dr. Ehrman said there is no afterlife and that this life is all there is. With such statements, he most certainly was trying to convince the audience that there is no afterlife.

From what I can tell, Dr. Ehrman has done as much or more than any single individual in modern times to destroy the Christian faith of literally thousands of people, young and old alike, across the globe. He has written four *New York Times* bestsellers, in each of which he boldly proclaims that the Bible is not God’s Word, Jesus was not, and never claimed to be, God, the Christian God does not exist, and the resurrection of Jesus never occurred. And then he stood before a live audience of 1,500 people and tried to convince them that he was not there to convince them of anything. Such a ploy is nothing short of dishonest. It would be my plea and prayer that every person who views the debate could see past such subtle and devious devices.

THE LOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL ASPECTS OF SUFFERING

THE “problem of suffering,” as it is often called, is used by unbelievers

to cast doubt on the existence of the God of the Bible. The tactic normally employed, and the one utilized by Dr. Ehrman, is to rattle off a series of statistics about death, disease, murder, war, genocide, natural disasters, and a host of other calamities and then finish the list with a question such as, “Are you telling me that a loving God allows that?” This is a well-known rhetorical device designed to appeal to your emotions. There is no logical argument made. There is nothing in the statement that would lead a person to correctly conclude, “Thus the Christian God does not exist.” It is simply an emotional appeal designed to leave the listener with the sense that something is wrong, when in reality, there has been no real evidence presented that verifies the conclusion.

The emotional appeal presented by unbelievers such as Dr. Ehrman has long been known to be a logical fallacy—an incorrect way to arrive at any conclusion. You can find this logical fallacy in virtually every list of logical fallacies. One sample that represents the standard discussion of the appeal to emotion states that an

appeal to emotion is when a person attempts

to manipulate an emotional response in place of a valid or compelling argument. Appeals to emotion include appeals to fear, envy, hatred, pity, pride, and more. It’s important to note that sometimes a logically coherent argument may inspire emotion or have an emotional aspect, but the problem and fallacy occurs when emotion is **used instead of a logical argument, or to obscure the fact that no compelling rational reason exists for one’s position.** Everyone, bar sociopaths, is affected by emotion, and so appeals to emotion are a very common and effective argument tactic, but they’re ultimately flawed, dishonest, and tend to make one’s opponents justifiably emotional (“Appeal to Emotion,” 2014).

Throughout the debate, it was clear that Dr. Ehrman was not providing logical arguments for his belief that pain and suffering supposedly show that the God of the Bible does not exist. Instead, he was simply offering an emotional appeal. He never once offered rational or logical evidence to affirm his position. Instead, he kept insisting that humans are emotional

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beings, and suffering is emotional. In fact, he attempted to belittle the idea that we should even approach suffering from a logical standpoint. He stated that the concepts of suffering “couldn’t be solved like a mathematical formula.” And he said that it is not “whether $2+2=4$ or not, it’s a matter of how to make sense of it all.” The irony of such a statement is that “to make sense of it all” demands that there be something more than emotion to our answer. “Making sense” means thinking correctly, logically, or rationally about something. It is impossible “to make sense” of anything without providing logical answers to the questions presented.

Dr. Ehrman’s raw appeal to emotion is misguided and inadequate. Any legitimate answer to suffering should have **both a proper emotional and a logical aspect**. Dr. Ehrman as much as admitted that he cannot provide a rational reason to accept his conclusion that the Christian God does not exist. In the course, of the debate he conceded over and over that there is no logical reason to be an unbeliever. He rested his case on his emotional appeal. In contrast, however, Christianity and the Bible can offer both logical and emotional ways to validate the claims that an all-loving, all-powerful God exists. The Bible certainly offers logical reasons that explain suffering, such as—God giving people free will and them misusing it; some suffering resulting as a punishment for wicked deeds; some suffering being redemptive and bringing about a greater good; and the opportunity of an afterlife where all can be made right. The Bible also offers the only satisfactory emotional answer to suffering: that God, in the human form of Jesus Christ, came to Earth to share in our suffering. The battered body of the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross for the sins of man provides the final emotional exclamation point to the logical

answers to suffering provided in the Bible.

EHRMAN DENIES OBJECTIVE MORAL VALUES

I CONTINUE to be astonished at the admissions that unbelievers such as Dr. Ehrman and others I have debated make during our debates. For instance, when I debated Dan Barker in 2009, he admitted that, according to his view of atheism, it would be permissible to rape two million girls to save humanity. After such admissions, I am awestruck that other unbelievers continue to align themselves with such debased and immoral thinking. In my debate with Dr. Ehrman, he made some of the most serious and baffling admissions of any unbeliever that I have heard in any debate.

In my opening statements, I presented two problems for unbelief as it relates to suffering and God’s existence. First, I presented the moral argument for God’s existence, which states that if objective moral values exist, then God exists. Objective moral values do exist, therefore God exists. From what I had read from the pen of Dr. Ehrman and from what I had heard in his other

debates, I assumed he would argue that there can be objective moral values without a Creator. After all, he is very fond of saying that this world is unfair, unjust, and that there is something wrong with it. If there really are objective concepts of fairness and justice, then those objective values must be explained. It was rather surprising when he abandoned the idea of objective moral values and stated that there are none. He argued that cultural anthropologists have “shown” that some cultures have differing sets of values, and therefore there cannot be any objective values. He insisted that there are “no moral absolutes,” and we do not need to provide any logical or philosophical reasons why we think something is wrong; we should simply be able to say that we **think** something is right or wrong, and that should suffice.

It was clear in the debate that Dr. Ehrman’s position (that there are no absolutes) is indefensible. During the discussion, it was brought up that the Nazis were doing what they thought was right by killing millions of Jews. Can we, as a different society and culture, tell the Nazis that they were violating some law

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that is higher than a cultural law? According to Dr. Ehrman's position, we cannot. In fact, he insisted that there are no "moral imperatives." A moral imperative is something that a person is bound by objective moral law to follow. When we begin a statement with, "you should...", the "should" implies that there is something that you are obliged to do. Dr. Ehrman's position is that there is nothing that one person can legitimately say another person "should" do. And yet, Dr. Ehrman often says (even though it contradicts his position) we "should" do this or that.

I have rarely heard an unbeliever in public in modern times so openly embrace moral relativism and deny moral absolutes. This denial of moral absolutes is not even embraced by some of the most hardnosed atheists, such as Sam Harris or Michael Ruse. In fact, Michael Ruse stated: "The man who says that it is morally acceptable to rape little children, is just as mistaken as the man who says that $2 + 2 = 5$ " (1982, p. 275). What Dr. Ehrman tried to do is say that there are no moral absolutes—no moral imperatives—but at the same time say we should still be able to say that some things are absolutely right and absolutely wrong. When he abandoned absolute moral values, he destroyed the foundation that would permit any person to say something is wrong, unfair, or unjust. In essence, he was saying that he might not like certain things, like someone beating a child for fun, but since there are no moral absolutes or imperatives, one culture cannot tell another culture that it is wrong for them to do it. [For a discussion of the moral argument, see Lyons, 2011).]

EASY ANSWERS

THROUGHOUT the debate, and often in his writings, Dr. Ehrman

claims that Christian apologists are providing easy answers and are not really wrestling with the reality of suffering. Ehrman is fond of saying, and said at least twice in the debate, that if there is an answer that can be given in 20 seconds that supposedly solves "the problem of suffering," then it is almost certainly wrong. The implication of his statement is that his brand of unbelief does not provide these types of "easy" answers. In fact, during the debate, he claimed that he did not even have any answers, just questions. And he disparaged me for claiming to have answers, as though somehow, if a person claims to have any definite answers, he is doing something wrong.

This "easy answers" idea turns out to be inconsistent. Dr. Ehrman claims not to be giving answers to the problem of suffering, but that is not true. He **is** offering answers. On his blog he stated: "There is suffering because people are able to do nasty things when they want, and they often do them, usually because it advances their own purposes; and there is suffering because the universe we live in is a hard and cruel place that doesn't give a rip about us or our needs and sometimes we get in the way of its workings" (Ehrman, 2013). His answer is that there is suffering because there is no loving God. As I stated in the debate, that answer takes far less than 20 seconds to state. And it is an answer, ironically, that is very "easy." That is, without a God, we do not have to wrestle with things that seem unjust or unfair. Without a God, we do not have to demand that other people adhere to absolute moral values. Without a God, there is no "problem of suffering" because humans are just another living organism that happen to get in the way of the naturalistic workings of the Universe. Dr. Ehrman's idea of an "easy answer" cannot be defined in any real sense. He means that any answer

that includes God or an afterlife is "easy," and **his** answers (that he does not call answers, because remember he is not trying to convince anyone of anything) that do not include God or an afterlife are not easy. I find it fitting that when C.S. Lewis was struggling through his unbelief, and he ran into the problem of trying to arrive at absolute moral values without God, he rejected unbelief and stated, "Consequently, atheism turns out to be too **simple**" (1952, pp. 45-46). "There is no God." "This Universe is chaotic and cares nothing for us." Those are some of the "easiest" and most unsatisfactory answers ever given to suffering.

THE BIBLE TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT

ONE issue on which Dr. Ehrman spent a considerable amount of time in his opening statements was his assertion that the Bible writers have different, and often contradictory, views of how to deal with suffering. Dr. Ehrman delights in saying that the book of Job claims that Job is such a "peon" (Ehrman's word) that he shouldn't even ask why he is suffering. Dr. Ehrman insists that the prophets viewed suffering as punishment: God bringing suffering into the lives of those who disobey. He contends that the apocalyptic writers had an altogether different view of suffering that contradicted that of the prophets. He claims that the apocalyptic view is that evil forces in this world are causing suffering, and those who are righteous are suffering because of these evil forces.

The contention that the Bible writers' views on suffering are contradictory can only be made if **you leave out large portions of what the books actually say**. This point became clear in the debate when Dr. Ehrman claimed to hold to the view of Ecclesiastes—"that we should eat and drink for tomorrow we die." When the entirety of the book is

(cont. on p. 80)

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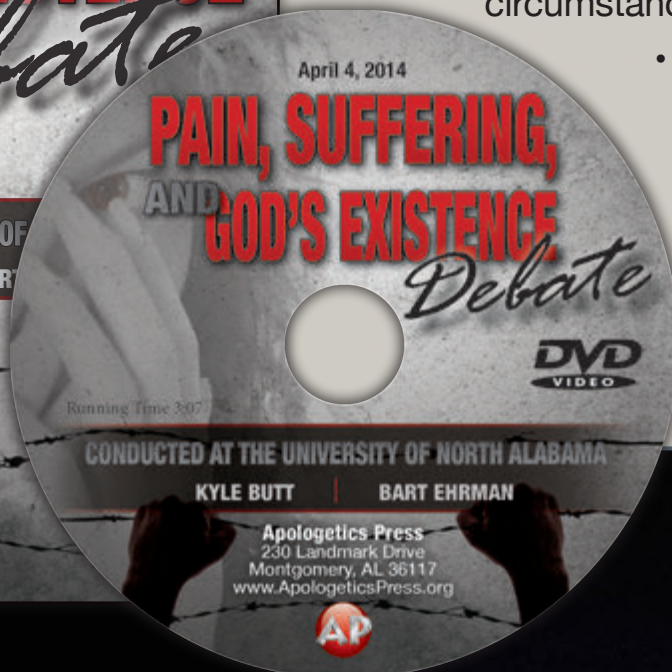
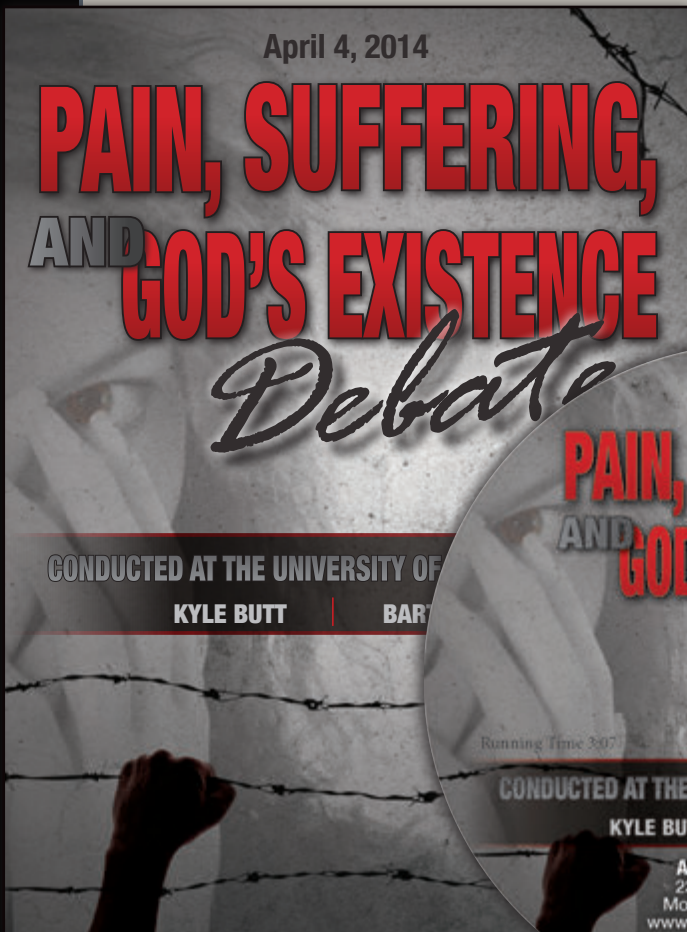
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The Christian Student Center of the University of North Alabama hosted a debate between Apologetics Press author Kyle Butt and University of

North Carolina professor Bart Ehrman. The debate was on the subject of suffering and the existence of God. Ehrman affirmed: "The pain and suffering in the world indicate that the Christian God does not exist." Kyle denied that proposition.

- The world is immersed in suffering, pain, disease, and distress
- How can the God of the Bible permit such widespread circumstances?

- Does the existence of suffering prove that God does not exist?





Kyle Butt

Bart Ehrman

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read, however, it is clear that the writer summed up the whole of man by saying that humans should fear God and keep His commandments (12:13-14). Dr. Ehrman claimed that the conclusion had been added on by a later writer. But there is no textual evidence that would lead to this conclusion. In fact, other verses in the book, such as 11:9, which says that God will bring each person into judgment for his deeds, or 7:29 that says that God made man upright but he has chosen to do evil, do not correspond with Dr. Ehrman's unbelief. It is only when those verses are intentionally ignored that the teaching of the book could be construed to be contradictory to other teachings about suffering found in the Bible. Furthermore, Dr. Ehrman misses the point that Ecclesiastes was written to show that only when life is viewed from an earthly, materialistic perspective, is all life meaningless. When viewed in light of eternity, there is a purpose to this life (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14).

We can further see the flaws of Dr. Ehrman's assessment in his dealing with apocalyptic literature. He insists that according to such literature, it is only the wicked who prosper, and it is the righteous who suffer at the hands of the evil spiritual forces. Yet a quick look at the book of Daniel shows this to be an oversimplified statement of what the writers actually said. Why are the Israelites in captivity? Because of their own sins. God is punishing them. Why are Daniel and his friends suffering? Because the righteous sometimes suffer. Does Daniel ever prosper? Yes, and he is elevated to one of the most honorable positions in the kingdom. Is there an afterlife in this book? Certainly since "those who sleep in the dust will arise, and some will go to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (12:2). Are some aspects

of suffering redemptive? Yes, that is why Nebuchadnezzar in chapter four is humbled by God and then given his kingdom back after he repented. There is nothing in apocalyptic literature that cannot be reconciled with every other answer given in the Bible. In reality, the books of the Bible supplement one another in their dealing with suffering in order to give a broad answer to the many different aspects of the topic. Dr. Ehrman's accusation that the Bible is contradictory on the theme of suffering is inaccurate and cannot be sustained.

THE TRAGEDY OF UNBELIEF

DR. EHRMAN is one of the most well-known and highly credentialed unbelievers in the world. The flaws and inconsistencies in his positions are not due to a lack of intelligence. The flaws are inherent to unbelief. Since disbelief in God and the Bible as His Word is irrational, there will always be aspects of every unbeliever's case that cannot be defended. Ultimately, the most heartbreaking failure of unbelief is the void it causes in the spiritual lives of its adherents. Even though unbelievers attempt to deny the spiritual dimension of their lives, this denial comes with tragic consequences. For instance, in his book on suffering, Dr. Ehrman wrote:

The Problem is this: I have such a fantastic life that I feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for it; I am fortunate beyond words. But I don't have anyone to express my gratitude to. This is a void deep inside me, a void of wanting someone to thank, and I don't see any plausible way of filling it (2008, p. 128).

Dr. Ehrman has a deep void inside that he cannot fill because he attempts to deny that he is a spiritual being created in the image of God. One of the most basic human emotions in the face of blessings is the desire to

thank the Giver of those blessings. By denying God's existence, Ehrman has denied himself the opportunity to be a completely fulfilled human. It is for this reason that I come away from debates such as this one with a heavy heart of pity and sorrow for those who have chosen unbelief.

Another telling statement comes from Dr. Ehrman in his discussion of hell. He states:

As a result, when I fell away from my faith—not just in the Bible as God's inspired word, but in Christ as the only way of salvation, and eventually from the view that Christ was himself divine, and beyond that from the view that there is an all-powerful God in charge of this world—I still wondered, deep down inside: could I have been right after all? What if I was right then but wrong now? Will I burn in hell forever? The fear of death gripped me for years, and there are still moments when I wake up at night in a cold sweat (2008, p. 127.)

Ehrman's haunting admission brings to mind the only solution to this crippling fear. As the Hebrews writer stated, Jesus shared in humanity's flesh and blood that "through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15). As much as Dr. Ehrman tries to deny that Jesus is the answer, many of his statements belie his inability to do so. In one of his blog posts, he stated:

When I was a Christian, acknowledging that the myth of the incarnation was a myth, I accepted the myth as saying something very profound. In that myth, the ultimate reality (call it God) did not come into the world in a blaze of power worthy of, well, a Roman emperor. He came as an impoverished child to an unwed mother in the midst of a world of pain and suffering; and this child grew in poverty and urged his followers to give of themselves for the sake of others, insisting that

it was the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the hungry, the sick, the demon-possessed, the sinners, the outcasts who were the concern of that ultimate reality. **That made a lot of sense to me. It still does** (2012, emp. added).

After pouring over Dr. Ehrman's materials, meeting him in a head-to-head debate, and praying for him frequently, I pity him most because he now lives a life with no hope and without God in this world. The answer to his struggle with suffering, to his attempts to "make sense of it all" is staring him in the face, in the person of Jesus Christ. But Bart refuses to accept the answer, and instead, attempts to satisfy himself with questions that leave him with a deep void in his life and frightened about eternity.

After the lights are out, and the final scene on life's curtain is almost drawn, let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Would to God that Bart Ehrman and other unbelievers truly accepted the book of Ecclesiastes.

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Was the Big Bang Just Proven by Astronomers?

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

"THEORY No More? Scientists Make 'Big Bang' Breakthrough with Find" (2014, emp. added). "Space Ripples Reveal Big Bang's **Smoking Gun**" (Overbye, 2014, emp. added). "Big Bang's 'Smoking Gun' **Confirms** Early Universe's Exponential Growth" (Vergano, 2014, emp. added). "Scientists Find Cosmic Ripples **from Birth of Universe**" (2014, emp. added). These titles are a sampling of the headlines after Caltech publicly announced some of their groundbreaking research. The impression being given (and, based on the many that have contacted us since the announcement, being accepted) is that the Big Bang has been finally proven. It has been "confirmed." As usual, many in the media have shown themselves to be irresponsible with their overstatements and wild implications. Since most people only read article titles and never actually read the details of an article, false impressions are immediately spread to the four winds, and usually, never to be corrected.

Under the Big Bang model, the Universe is theorized to be expanding outward from the point in space where the cosmic egg alleg-

edly exploded. However, no direct evidence has ever substantiated the claim that the Universe inflated in the violent way implied by the Theory—only circumstantial evidence. According to the model, gravitational waves would accompany the initial, rapid expansion immediately after the "bang," but until now, no direct evidence has ever surfaced for their existence. The new discovery is being hailed as the "first direct evidence" of Universal inflation ("Theory No More?...", 2014; "Scientists Find Cosmic Ripples...", 2014; Landau, 2014). Does that mean the Big Bang has been proven? No.

First, it should be emphasized that the media seems to be admitting in unison, parroting what scientists have told them, that **until now** there has been no direct evidence of Big Bang inflation. What does that indicate about all of those who for years have whole-heartedly proclaimed the Big Bang Theory as a proven fact? Is it not true that they were holding to a blind faith in the Theory? If so, why have so many believed in the theory and scoffed at those who believe in Creation, claiming (falsely) that creationists have a blind faith? What about

all the other tenets of naturalism held onto with such vigor that scientists and journalists have yet to admit are matters of blind faith? How are we to distinguish truth from misrepresentation? We have long argued that nothing should be believed without adequate evidence (the Law of Rationality), and the Bible verifies the importance of that truth (1 Thessalonians 5:21). The Creation model is supported by solid evidence and does not have to be accepted blindly. In truth, even believing in the idea of the Big Bang after the recent discovery is still irrational. How so?

Notice that if you read the news articles carefully, ignoring the clear bias for the Big Bang Theory exhibited in the titles, you will see disclaimers about the find: “if confirmed” (“Scientists Find Cosmic Ripples...”); “The new results, assuming they’re verified.... The new results do have to be verified” (Lemonick, 2014).

Because of how potentially important these results are, they **must be viewed with skepticism**, said David Spergel, professor of astrophysics at Princeton University. The measurement is a very difficult one to make and **could easily be contaminated**. There are, as it stands, some “oddities” in the results that could be concerning, he said. “**I am looking forward to seeing these results confirmed** or refuted by other experiments in the next year or two,” Spergel said (Landau, emp. added).

Evolutionary astrophysicist Stuart Clark, writing in *New Scientist*, added his disclaimer, cautiously stating, “If the result is confirmed...” (2014, p. 34). Clark quoted several others who agree. Astrophysicist Duncan Hanson of McGill University stated, “Some sort of confirmation

is definitely needed” (p. 34). Cosmologist John Peacock at the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh, UK said, “Assuming this is confirmed,” it would be quite a discovery (p. 34). Cosmologist Hiranya Peiris of the University College London noted, “[A]s a scientist, I have to be skeptical” (Clark, p. 34). Summarizing: nothing has been proven. So there is **still** no direct evidence of Big Bang inflation—implying that those who accept the Big Bang are still fideists.

Second, that said, actual, conclusive evidence of inflation would still not prove the Big Bang. In the words of one of the science reporters cited in the articles above, “There’s no way for us to know exactly what happened some 13.8 billion years ago, when our universe burst onto the scene” (Landau). [NOTE: Even with that admission, notice the blatant bias towards the Big Bang Theory, as though its truth is a given, when this very reporter admits in her article that the discovery in question is the first direct evidence ever found for gravitational waves, and even these results “must be viewed with skepticism.”] Clark admitted that “we can’t even be sure there was a big bang,” even if inflation is true, since “inflation effectively erases the details of what went before” (p. 35). Einstein predicted the existence of gravitational waves (the purported discovery in March) in his General Theory of Relativity years ago (Aron, 2014), as well as the idea of Universal expansion, and yet a recently discovered Einstein document highlights his resistance to the idea of the Big Bang Theory, which he at one point called “abominable” (Castelvecchi, 2014). While he accepted gravitational waves

and the idea that the Universe is expanding, he was still hesitant to subscribe to the Big Bang Theory. So, clearly **the Big Bang is not a required inference from expansion and gravitational waves**—there could be other causes. Clark admitted, “Other theories can give rise to similar patterns, so their existence is not itself proof of inflation” (p. 34). No wonder *New Scientist* published a list of scientists who are skeptical and even doubtful of the Big Bang in 2004 (Lerner, 2004)—a list that has since grown to include several hundred scientists (“An Open Letter...,” 2014). In short, discovering the existence of gravitational waves says nothing about what actually caused them in the first place, and in truth, there could be many possible causes other than inflation. Consider the following example: if a three-year-old were to sneak into the kitchen and eat some chips, in all likelihood there would be crumbs on the floor. There are chip crumbs on the floor in the kitchen. So there must be a three-year-old who snuck into the kitchen and ate some chips. Really? While inflation and the existence of gravitational waves **should** be the case if the Big Bang model were true, the opposite does not follow: inflation would not imply that the Big Bang is true.

Clark stated, “Such a potential breakthrough is in **urgent need of corroboration**, not least because as things stand **not everything adds up**” (p. 34, emp. added). The data do not harmonize with what was expected according to the theory of inflation, and according to Hanson, the results indicate inflationists “may have to extend the cosmology” (as quoted in Clark,

p. 35). Clark translated Hanson's words: "By that he means dreaming up even more outlandish versions of inflation" to harmonize the evidence (p. 35). We might ask why, considering a plausible explanation for the origin (i.e., creation) of the Universe has been on the table for centuries, in no need of revision.

The Creation model does not exclude the idea of Universal expansion. God could have simply created the Universe in such a way that expansion happens. But the idea that the Universe was originally crammed into a little ball that exploded, rapidly inflated at a rate above the speed of light, and over billions of years morphed into the Universe we see today, complete with complexity and life, definitely contradicts Scripture (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11). Universal expansion, however, or the existence of gravitational waves, would not inherently contradict Creation. In fact, the concept of expansion might be exactly what is being alluded to in Isaiah 40:22, 44:24, Psalm 104:1-2, and Zechariah 12:1. The Hebrew word translated "stretches out" (referring to God's activity on the heavens) in Isaiah 40:22, for instance, is an active participle which, according to Hebrew scholars indicates "a state of continued activity"—implying that the stretching might be continuing to occur today (Weingreen, 1959, p. 66). While Isaiah compares God's activity to that of spreading out a tent to dwell in and stretching out a curtain, cosmologists who describe expansion today describe it like the expansion that occurs as a balloon stretches out (Davis, 2010)—a very similar concept to that of setting up a tent.

Bottom line: the Big Bang has not been proven. And further, it cannot be proven, because (1) the nature of the Big Bang precludes it from being verified, and (2) because a false idea cannot be legitimately proven. It has been shown to be false scientifically (May, et al., 2003). Further, a supernatural Creator is required in the equation, and naturalism, including the Big Bang Theory, does not allow Him (Miller, 2013). In truth, God told us how the Universe was created in a Book which proves itself to be His inspired Word, and it was not through a cosmic explosion (Butt, 2007). If the Bible is inspired, it must be right. True science will never contradict it.

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NOTE FROM

The Editor



Butt/Ehrman Debate DVD

We at Apologetics Press have always been particularly sensitive to those voices that have exerted the greatest negative impact on mainstream culture. The forces of evolution, atheism, skepticism, and pseudoscience have swept over American civilization with flood-like devastation. For over 35 years, A.P. has sought to combat and expose these sinister forces in hopes of insulating as many souls as possible from their fury. The truth is powerful. It will save the receptive heart. But it must be proclaimed and defended (1 Peter 3:15).

An all-too-common sentiment in our culture is that oral debates are ineffectual. But, of course, such thinking is incorrect. As the Bible abundantly demonstrates, the time will **never** come—this side of eternity—when it will not be necessary for the saints to stand up and speak against the error that seeks to subvert men's souls. Even as Jesus went “toe-to-toe” with Satan (Matthew 4), and Elijah squared off publicly with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 19), so Christians must ever be willing to challenge the forces of falsehood that seek to turn people away from the living God.

Two months ago (April) on the campus of the University of North Alabama, a debate was conducted

between A.P.'s Kyle Butt and University of North Carolina professor Bart Ehrman. Ehrman has been a popular and prolific writer in recent years. His writings constitute significant influences in undermining belief in God and Christianity for many young people. Thanks to our good friends at World Video Bible School, the debate was taped, edited, and now is available for purchase at our Web site or via our offices. The subject: Does the pain and suffering in the world indicate that the Christian God does not exist? Even if you have already viewed the debate, you will want to have a copy on hand to urge others to view it and see firsthand the superiority of the truth. You might want to play the DVD in Bible classes for teens and adults. Or you might want to have a viewing in your own home. Please aid us in our evangelistic efforts to point people to the truth about God, by ordering your copy and, perhaps, copies for others.

Dave Miller

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for More Details